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ABSTRACT

Administrators participating in six Phi Delta Kappa Teacher Appraisal for Improvement workshops (TAPI), were surveyed regarding the impact of TAPI upon teacher evaluation in their schools during the following academic year, as opposed to immediately after the workshop. The survey sought to determine: (1) degree of implementation of any teacher evaluation system; (2) primary purpose; (3) characteristics of the system, as keyed to 12 TAPI evaluation criteria; (4) use of TAPI training; and (5) retrospective attitudes toward the workshop. The 41 usable responses represented 20% of the total population and 50% of the sample. Conclusions are limited due to the small sample; however, it appears that those attending such a workshop generally had a formal operational system of evaluation (83%); fewer than half have modified their system since attending (41%). Most reported using their system for both teacher improvement and administrative decisions, and reported using from two of seven TAPI evaluation criteria. Respondents were nearly equally divided regarding use of TAPI training. No significant conclusions could be reached after comparing workshop attitudes with subsequent use of TAPI. (The survey questionnaire is appended.) (Author/CP)

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The Influence of T.A.F.I. Workshops upon Planning or Changing School Evaluations

by

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

The Influence of T.A.F.I. Workshops upon Planning or Changing School Evaluations

Introduction

Typically, workshops are evaluated by a brief questionnaire immediately at the end of the training program. The TAFI workshop follows this pattern. Occasionally, such workshops have a pretest-posttest design built in to seek evidence of changes occurring during the workshop. TAFI is one of these. Seldom is an attempt made to evaluate the impact of a workshop through a follow-up to verify persistence of effects.

Planning for evaluation generally takes place after development of the program. TAFI materials have an evaluation process built into the workshop. In fact, the pretest serves an admirable purpose of sensitizing the participants to the forthcoming material. While not a strong design, the TAFI evaluation should provide feedback to workshop leaders.

Unfortunately, it has been my observation that ratings made by workshop participants, immediately following the workshop, tend to contain two very specific rating errors: Halo effects and leniency of rating (Guilford, 1954). One of the primary steps in teaching is to motivate the students, get them excited about learning, and well planned workshops do this. This excitement often carries over into the final evaluation. The group is either a) getting to be a cohesive social unit and feeling good about it, or b) happy that the entire program is over and they can leave. Either way, the post-

workshop evaluation is generally what Davis and McCallon (1974) describe as a "popularity poll". Though useful for immediate feedback when their shortcomings are recognized, the postworkshop evaluation is less than satisfactory for determining impact.

While most evaluations tend to emphasize the summative function, the TAFI evaluation is generally a formative tool to assess the process. Grant and Anderson (1977), suggest that "it is important to determine whether skills and knowledge learned in training are exhibited in the work situation and whether the training solves the performance problem it was intended to solve."

The purpose of this paper is to describe a follow-up survey of participants in a series of TAFI workshops to determine what evidence exists that participation in the workshop has influenced teacher appraisal practices.

Specifically, this paper will report the results of a follow-up survey of six workshops conducted during the 1977-78 academic year, involving 204 persons. The survey questionnaire sought to determine:

1. The degree of implementation of any teacher appraisal system in the school or district of the respondent.
2. Whether the system was in operation when the individual attended the workshop, or not?
3. The primary purpose of such a system, i.e., for administrative decisions, teacher improvement, or both.
4. Characteristics of the system as keyed to TAFI work-

shop elements.

5. Whether the respondent reported using the TAFI training?
6. Retrospective ratings of some of the process variables of the workshops.

While the questionnaire attempted to distinguish between teachers, administrators and others, because the vast majority of participants and respondents were administrators, no comparisons are made along this dimension.

Respondents

The six workshop attendance rosters were used to randomly select a 40% sample stratified by workshop. The popuation represented 204 participants in workshops primarily conducted by one individual during the year. Participants who were not public school persons were deleted and substituted in the sample. A total of 82 persons were selected in the sample and sent a questionnaire with a letter seeking their cooperation (copy of the letter and questionnaire in Appendix A). One postcard follow-up was attempted but gained no response. Two responses received were unusable (one person claimed not to have attended and another could not identify what workshop was referred to). The net usable responses totaled 41, 50% of the sample, and 20% of the total population. Lacking any other information, the assumption is made for the purposes of this paper, that the respondent group is generally representative of the population.

Degree of Implementation

Each respondent was asked to describe the status of any teacher appraisal system in his/her school or district as (a) a formal system in operation, (b) a formal system in planning, (c) an informal system in operation, or (d) no appraisal system. Table 1 indicates the preponderance of those reporting a formal system in operation, 34 of 41 respondents (83%). Only one (2%) reported no system in his/her school or district. It might be of interest to note that eight of the formal and one informal systams operate in schools while all other systems operate district-wide (26 formal in operation, 63%; 2 formal in planning, 5%; and 2 informal, 5%).

Table 1

How would you describe the status of teacher appraisal in your school or district?

	Number	Percent
Formal and in Operation	34	83%
Formal in Planning Stage	3	7%
Informal and in Operation	3	7%
None	1	2%
Total Respondents	41	--

When Attended Variables

The degree of implementation is principally of interest in relation to several other questions. These relationships are expressed as cross-tabulations in Table 2.

Table 2

Status of Appraisal System by Participant Attendance Variables

Attendance Variables	Status of System: Formal in Operation	Formal Planning	Informal	None	Total No.	Total %
System in Effect	32	1	2	0	35	85
Not in Effect	2	2	1	1	6	15
System has been modified	15	1	1	0	17	41
System has not been modified	19	2	2	1	24	59
Participant Input	25	3	3	0	31	76
No Input	9	0	0	1	10	24
Would like to change the system	19	2	3	0	24	59
No change needed	15	1	0	1	17	41
Total Number	34	3	3	1	41	
Total Percent	83	7	7	2	--	

Whether the present appraisal system was in effect or not when the respondent attended the TAFI workshop seems to be related to its present status (χ^2 (3 df) = 15.22, $p < .01$). Of the 41 respondents, 35 (85%) reported that the appraisal system was in effect when they attended TAFI and 94% of those reporting a formal appraisal system in operation indicated that the system was in effect when they attended the workshop. It might be tentatively suggested that those who attended the workshop are those who have given considerable thought to an appraisal system, rather than those seeking to find out about such a system.

Has the appraisal system been modified since you attended the TAFI workshop, was answered by 24 (59%) of the respondents in the negative. While responses to the question would you like to change the system was almost a mirror, 24 affirmative (59%).

As to whether the participants had had input to the appraisal system, 75% reported that they had. Of the 24% who had not had input, all were in schools/districts which had a formal system except for the one person reporting no appraisal system. When whether or not participants had had input into the development of the system was examined against whether or not the system had been modified, a significant relationship emerged (χ^2 (1 df) = 3.82, $p < .05$). The data indicates that of the ten respondents indicating that they had <u>not</u> had input to the system all were in schools/districts where the system had <u>not</u> been modified since the workshop. However, the same ten persons were equally divided, five and five, as to whether they would like to see a change in the system.

Table 3

Frequency with which elements employed in teacher appraisal system reported by purpose of system

	Purpose of the System					
	Teacher Improvement		Combination		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Structured Observ.	7	100	31	91	38	93
Administrator Ratings	5	71	27	79	32	78
Qualitative Ratings	4	57	26	76	30	73
Unstructured Observations	5	71	19	56	24	59
Quantitative Ratings	1	14	15	44	16	39
Student Achievement related to Goals	4	57	9	26	13	32
Student Achievement related to objectives	3	43	7	21	10	24
Peer/Colleague Ratings	2	29	2	6	4	10
Student Ratings	-	-	3	9	3	7
Teacher Performance Testing	-	-	3	9	3	7
Teacher Skill Testing	-	-	2	3	2	5
Regression Approach	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Respondents	7	17	34	83	41	--

Primary Purpose of the System

When asked if the system were primarily for teacher improvement, administrative decisions, or a combination of both, an overwhelming majority indicate a combination of both (32 or 78%), while a few (7 or 17%) indicate the purpose to be teacher improvement. The remaining (2 or 5%) failed to provide a response to this item and no one reported that the system was primarily for administrative decision-making. During discussion of the TAFI materials, it is commonly recognized that an effective appraisal system cannot satisfactorily be used for both improvement and administrative uses. It may be that the question was ambiguous and was marked to indicate that two separate systems exist, one for improvement and one for administrative decision-making in the majority of schools/districts. At least one respondent reported on two systems, one for teacher improvement and one for administrative purposes. (The Teacher Improvement System was reported in this paper).

Characteristics of the System

Within the workshop materials, eight approaches to teacher appraisal are discussed. The eight approaches contain a total of twelve elements or characteristics. When asked to check those characteristics which pertain to their system, participants responded with frequencies as shown in Table 3.

Perhaps the most startling information on this table is the frequency with which respondents report using student achievement related to goals or to objectives. From the author's knowledge of the use of student ratings in higher

education, it also seems somewhat surprising that no one reported using student ratings for teacher improvement only and only three (7%) indicate using this method in combination.

The purpose of TAFI workshops is primarily to encourage educators to consider multiple measures and particularly to consider alternatives to the standard administrator visits. Therefore, the reported frequency yields a somewhat less than clear indication of impact of the workshop. Of the twelve characteristics (actually eleven used), respondents reported using from 2 to 7 elements within a system. The median was 4 and typically a system would use structured and/or unstructured observations with Administrator ratings and qualitative and/or quantitative ratings.

Use Made of the Training

Respondents were asked if they had made use of the training received in the TAFI workshop. Table 4 depicts the results of that question when applied against the status of the system.

Table 4

Use Made of the Training Compared With Status of the System

	Have you made use of the training?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formal System in operation	19	56%	15	44%	34	83%
Formal System in Planning	1	33%	2	67%	3	7%
Informal System in operation	3	100%	-	--	3	7%
No System	-		1	100%	1	2%
Total	23	56%	18	44%	41	--

Respondents were nearly equally divided in terms of use made of the training. Though too small to be significant, it is curious that those systems in the planning stage report not using the TAFI training and yet all three of the respondents with informal systems reported using the training.

Ratings of the Workshops

On the assumption that information perceived as valuable would be used, the value of the workshops as reported by ratings were examined against whether the training was used. Three of the five ratings yielded significant chi square when three levels of ratings (e.g., Very useful, Somewhat useful, and Not very useful) were examined against two levels of whether the training has been used (Yes and No). These process ratings and statistics are:

Rating	χ^2(2df)	p <
Usefulness of training	8.38	.02
Level of specificity of workshop	.51	.48
Pace of workshop	5.69	.06
Amount of required reading	3.73	.15
Extend expectations were met	7.71	.02

When ratings were crossed with responses as to whether the system had been modified or not and whether the respondent had had input into the present system, only two ratings yielded a significant chi square ($p < .10$). Neither of these dealt with the input question. Statistics are:

Rating	X^2(2df)	p <
Usefulness of training	2.77	.25
Level of specificity of workshop	.54	.46
Pace of workshop	4.84	.09
Amount of required reading	1.25	.54
Extent expectations were met	5.98	.05

In both instances, those reporting no modification tended to rate the variable considerably lower than those reporting having a modified system.

Conclusions

Workshops generally receive inflated evaluation feedback. The true test of any training is a change in behavior at the workplace. It would appear from this small survey that our knowledge of the impact of TAFI workshops is still equivocal. It would appear that those who attended such workshops frequently have a system of teacher appraisal in operation. Further, of those who attend the workshops, fewer than half have modified their appraisal systems since attending the workshop.

On the other hand, a significantly greater number of those who reported modifying their system and reported using the training also reported that their expectations had generally been met or exceeded by the workshop than those reporting no modification and no use of the training. These self reported assessments do not provide strong evidence of workshop impact but represent fruitful areas for further exploration.

Teacher appraisal is a topic which interests most administrators and many teachers. That PDK has packaged such a workshop is evidence that the idea is appealing to many people. It

would seem that it is very important to augment the considerable evidence being accumulated dealing with formative and process evaluation and assess the impact or summative results of these workshops.

A much larger number of workshops were held during the 1978-79 school year than the 1977-78 year and it is intended to replicate this survey with a more carefully designed questionnaire and a more aggressive follow-up.

References

Davis, L. N. and McCallon, E. Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Workshops. Austin, Texas: Learning Concepts, 1974.

Grant, Donald L. and Anderson, Scarvia B. Issues in the evaluation of training. Professional Psychology. November 1977. pp. 659-673.

Guilford, J.P. Psychometric Methods. New York: McGraw Hill, 1954.

APPENDIX A

Dear

You attended a workshop on Teacher Appraisal for Improvement some time ago. Would you please take a few minutes to answer a brief questionnaire concerning that workshop?

The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess the impact of the workshop and to find out how useful people believe that it was after they have had a chance to study the material. It is often helpful to identify the effects of an activity such as a workshop. The information which you provide could be of help in making the workshop more useful to others.

In addition to the questionnaire, you will also note that there is an envelope enclosed in which to return the questionnaire. Additionally, if you have an appraisal system in your school or school district, would you consider sending any materials which might be used as an example of an operating system. If such materials would be expensive to reproduce or to mail, a brief summary would be helpful.

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible. If you answer it right now and mail it today, it will not get pushed aside. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

T. R. Cromack
Research Associate

TAFI FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Workshop attended _____ _____
(Date)

Position _____

If your position has changed since the workshop, please give your new position. _____

I. How would you describe the status of teacher appraisal in your school or district?

___ A. Formal system in operation. __School only. ___District-wide.

___ B. Formal system in planning. __School only. ___District-wide.

___ C. Informal system in operation. __School only. ___District-wide.

___ D. No appraisal system in the school or district.

(If you checked A, B, or C, please answer items 1-6, below. If you checked D, go to item II, on the next page.)

1. Is the system primarily for: Teacher improvement?____, Administrative decisions?_____, Combination of both?____.

2. Please check those characteristics or elements of the system (check as many as apply).

____ Structured observations
____ Unstructured observations
____ Administrator ratings
____ Peer (colleague) ratings
____ Student ratings
____ Quantitative ratings
____ Qualitative ratings
____ Teacher skill testing
____ Student achievement measures related to goals
____ Student achievement measures related to performance objectives
____ Teacher performance testing
____ Regression approach
____ Other (please describe on the back)

3. Was the present appraisal system in effect when you attended the TAFI workshop? Yes____ No____

4. Has it been modified since you attended the TAFI workshop? Yes____ No____

5. Did you have input to developing the present system? Yes____ No____

6. Would you like to change the system? Yes____ No____

If yes, in what way? _____

_____

_____

II. In retrospect, would you describe the TAFI workshop which you attended?

A. Usefullness of the information was

Very useful____ Somewhat useful____ Not very useful____

B. The level of specificity of the workshop was

Too specific____ About right____ Too general____

C. The pace at which the workshop was conducted was

Too fast____ About right____ Too slow____

D. The amount of required reading seemed

Too great____ About right____ Too little____

E. To what extent did the workshop meet your expectations?

My expectations were exceeded____ Generally met my expectations____ Fell below my expectations____

III. Have you made use of any of the TAFI workshop training in any way? Yes____ No____

If yes, please describe briefly in what way(s). _____

_____

_____

IV. Any additional comments or suggestions. _____

_____

_____

Thank you for your help and for returning this promptly to the Educational Research and Service Center, SUNY Albany.

Ted Cromack